

## REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-12 are amended, new claims 13-21 are added, and claim 5 is canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-4 and 6-21 are pending.

The amendments to the specification and claims, and the added new claims 13-21, are based on the application as originally filed, so it is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

In the office action, the applicants were requested to provide headings in the specification. The specification is amended accordingly.

In the office action, claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph regarding “go-and-stop” steps.

The phrases “go-and-stop” and “stop-and-go” have been amended to “intermittent”. It is respectfully submitted that the one having ordinary skill in the art would understand that the intermittent operation and movement of the sealing plates 11 are adequately supported in the application as originally filed, for example, at pages 7-8, corresponding to paragraphs [0019] to [0020] of the published application as well as FIG. 1 of the present application, in which is described the arrangement of the sealing plate 11 and an adjustment mechanism, including adjustment cylinders 55, for “three-dimensional displacement of a side seal 10 upon placement or pressing of the respective sealing plate 11”. Such operations are performed intermittently in various steps, as described at pages 8-9, corresponding to paragraphs [0021] to [0022] of the published application.

Accordingly, the specification and claims are amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, so reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In the office action, claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The claims are amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, so reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In the office action, it is stated that claims 5, 7-8, and 10 are objected to, but would be allowed if rewritten.

Claim 1 is amended to recite the subject matter of claim 5, claim 5 is canceled, claims 7-8 depend from amended claim 1, and claim 10 is amended to be in independent form. New claims 13-21 are added to depend from independent claim 10, and to recite the subject matter of claims 1-4, 6-9, and 11-12 but dependent from amended claim 10.

Therefore, all pending claims 1-4 and 6-21 recite allowable subject matter.

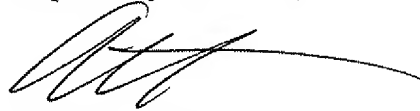
In the office action, claims 1-4, 6, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,201,362 to Yamagami et al.; claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Yamagami and either of U.S. Patent Number 6,032,722 to Russell et al. or U.S. Patent Number 5,584,335 to Barbe et al.; and claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Yamagami.

The pending claims 1-4 and 13-21 recite allowable subject matter, and therefore are patentable over the cited art, so reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, entry and approval of the present amendment and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested.

In case of any deficiencies in fees by the filing of the present amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such deficiencies in fees to Deposit Account Number 01-0035.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: September 25, 2007

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